



February 2, 2004

Reply to Attn of: GG

TO: Distribution

FROM: G/General Counsel

SUBJECT: Blanket Determination Regarding Attendance at the Reception to Honor the lives of the Crew of the Space Shuttle Columbia, Washington, DC, on February 2, 2004

On February 2, 2004, NASA will co-sponsor a reception to honor the lives of the crew of the Space Shuttle Columbia at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, on the first anniversary of their loss. As part of this event, Boeing will host a reception and a program starting at 6:30 p.m. in the Lockheed Martin IMAX Theater. I have determined it to be in the best interest of the Government for NASA employees to attend this event in their official capacities and as representatives of NASA.

The reception and program is being funded by Boeing. Co-sponsors include NASA, the National Air and Space Museum, and the Columbia Shuttle memorial Trust. The event will be widely attended by officials from other Federal agencies, members of Congress and their staffs, representatives of the space industry, families and friends of the crew of STS-107, international invitees, and members of the Armed Forces. The estimated cost of the event, which includes all food and beverages, is \$68.00 per person. Approximately 800 people are expected to attend the event. I find that this event meets the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 CFR §2635.204(g). In light of the importance of the ceremony in honoring the astronauts' lives and the accomplishments of the crew of the Columbia, I conclude that NASA's interest in its employees attending this event outweighs any concern that free attendance may, or may not appear to, improperly influence any NASA employees in the performance of their official duties.

Accordingly, NASA invitees may attend the reception and program on February 2, 2004, free of charge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul G. Pastorek", with a stylized flourish below it.

Paul G. Pastorek
General Counsel